

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA calls for integrated legal framework to address sexual misconduct in education
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is alarmed by ongoing sexual misconduct by educator in South African schools and the failure of existing legislation to adequately protect learners.

Recent reports have highlighted significant gaps in the legislative framework that allow sexual predators to continue working in educational environments, placing learners at risk. Schools should be safe havens where children can learn and grow without fear of abuse. Current legal and institutional measures are, however, insufficient to prevent and address sexual misconduct by educators. The PSA condemns this systemic failure and calls for urgent reforms to safeguard learners. The lack of coordination between the South African Council for Educators (SACE) and provincial Departments of Education results in inadequate oversight and accountability. It has been established that educators who resign following allegations of misconduct often escape reporting obligations that would prevent them from being rehired elsewhere. The current system also allows for gaps in reporting and enforcement, meaning that educators found guilty of misconduct can continue to work in schools. This is unacceptable and must be addressed immediately.

The overarching legislative framework, including the *Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act*, *Children's Act*, and *Employment of Educators Act*, must be strengthened to ensure that all educators are thoroughly vetted and that any allegations of misconduct are swiftly and effectively dealt with. On this basis, the PSA calls for amendment of the existing legislation to close loopholes that allow sexual predators to evade justice and continue working with children. There is urgent need for improved coordination between SACE, provincial Education Departments, and other relevant bodies to ensure comprehensive oversight and accountability. All role players must implement stringent reporting and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that an educator found guilty of sexual misconduct is permanently barred from working in any educational institution.

The PSA is committed to advocating for the safety and well-being of learners as well as ensuring the professionalism and dignity of the teaching profession. A few unworthy educators cannot be allowed to tarnish the image of this noble profession. The PSA urges the South African government to take immediate and decisive action to protect children and restore trust in the educational system.

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